

Timeline for the Legacy of Discovery

- 1970s Marc Gold suggests, “Train, don’t Test!” This value stance sets MG&A to develop strategies that do not rely on testing and comparison.
- 1986 Lou Brown suggests the use of an “ecological strategy” to get to know the curricular needs of students with significant disabilities
- 1986 - 1987 An early supported employment project through Syracuse University uses the term “Profile” for the narrative document describing job seekers as an alternative to testing procedures while Michael Callahan is doing doctoral work
- 1987 – 1990 United Cerebral Palsy Administration’s (UCPA) National Demonstration Employment Project uses the term, “the Vocational Profile Strategy” to describe the alternative of using vocational assessment to guide employment services for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities led by Michael Callahan as project director.
- 1987 The first nationally published “how-to” text on supported employment includes the Vocational Profile Strategy for individuals with significant disabilities, *Getting Employed, Staying Employed* (McLoughlin, Garner and Callahan, 1987).
- 1991 Michael Callahan writes an article for the *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* [1, (2)], on the vocational profile strategy, “Common Sense and Quality: Meaning Employment Outcomes for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities.” This was the first journal article on the process.
- 1990 – 1993 The Vocational Profile Strategy is included as a foundational service concept in the federally-funded staff project by UCPA, the Self-Directed Staff Training Project (SDST). This project trained hundreds of employment service staff in three states.
- 1993 – 1996 The Vocational Profile Strategy is included as an essential service in UCPA’s National Choice Project, one of seven national projects funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), designed to increase individual choice in the rehabilitation process.



- 1996 Melinda Mast and Michael Callahan write an article published by Marc Gold & Associates, “The Vocational Profile: A Process not a form”. This article identified and drove the need to focus on how to develop the information to be included in the profile form.
- 1996 Michael Callahan suggests the name, “Discovery”, to be used to describe the qualitative process to be used to develop the information developed for the profile form. It was also at this time, MG&A phased out using the previous phrase, the Vocational Profile Process in favor of Discovery.
- 2001 The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) coins the term “Customized Employment” and suggests that an “individualized determination of the strengths, needs, and interests of the person with a disability” be used to guide employment services. This “determination” was a generic way of describing the Discovery process.
- 2001 Michael Callahan makes the decision not to trademark the term Discovery and, instead, to offer it to the disability employment field as a generic concept, able to be used by all.
- 2003 In a meeting in Washington, DC, with employment professionals from across the US, Michael Callahan first hears someone not trained by MG&A use the term “Discovery” as a universal employment strategy.
- 2003 – 2007 MG&A is asked by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) to provide project management, training and technical assistance to the Mississippi Youth Transition Innovation (MYTI). Norciva Shumpert and Michael Callahan use Discovery as the starting point for all services in lieu of vocational assessments typically used by MDRS.
- 2006 MG&A, led by Norciva Shumpert, pilots Group Discovery services within a one-stop job center on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- 2009 MG&A hosts the first Discovery Retreat in Ocean Springs, MS. This retreat was designed to recruit stewards of the Discovery process from across the US. In the years since 2009, hundreds of employment staff, family members, persons with disabilities and other interested individuals have attended this on-going annual gathering.



- 2009 MG&A publishes the first of four manuals on the Discovery process. All four manuals are now available at marcgold.com – Discovery, Profiles, the Customized Plan for Employment and the Visual Resume.
- 2012 MG&A develops performance-based certification of Discovery using mentors. A cadre of mentors trained by MG&A provide support and feedback to participants.
- 2012 – 2017 MG&A is approached by Martin Gerry of Source America to provide training and technical assistance to a new project, Pathways to Employment. Michael Callahan and Norciva Shumpert provide training on Discovery, Customized Job Development and Systematic Instruction. This project used paid internships as a first step to employment. MG&A conceptualized “Expanded Discovery” to represent the additional information obtained during the internships. Mathematica Policy Research provided the data collection services that helped to establish the evidence base for Discovery.
- 2013 – 2018 The Arc of Pennsylvania asked MG&A to provide training and performance-based certification for Arc agencies and schools across PA. The Arc now provides this training and certification through an agreement with MG&A.
- 2016 MG&A is approved by ACRE (the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators) to offer certificates on National Certificate of Achievement on Employment Services, Basic Level, that includes Discovery as the lead concept.
- 2020 & 2021 MG&A holds virtual Discovery retreats using Zoom due to the COVID pandemic.